ISD/STD/Internet/Fax/E-Mail in H.P.

1585. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the STD/ISD/Internet/Fax/e-mail etc. facilities provided or proposed to be provided in various Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh during the year 2002-03;

(b) the Gram Panchayats with and without the above facilities, separately, in the State and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) 3 out of 3037 Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh have been provided with STD facilities as on 31.01.2003. STD/ISD/FAX facilities to 3005 Gram Panchayats and Internet/e-mail facility to 1867 Gram Panchayats can be provided on demand.

(c) STD/ISD/FAX/Internet/e-mail facility in the telephone exchanges serving the remaining panchayats are planned to be provided on upgradation of concerned exchages/media of these exchanges during 2003-04 subject to availability of resources.

Programme for handicapped in Himachal Pradesh

1586. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special programme has been developed by Government for deaf, dumb, and visually disabled persons in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) the centres where such programmes are being run for the disabled persons; and

(d) the additional centres proposed to be opened in the State during the next three years to give equal participation to disabled persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Cellular rates

†1587. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that owing to the rates, serious differences have been surfaced amongst various cellular companies affecting the subscribers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that private companies are thrusting upon the subscribers their own rules and rates as well; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to provide cheap and better service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Sir, Cellular Operators Association of India on behalf of the Cellular Operators have informed that they are not aware of any serious differences amongst various cellular companies in this regard.

(c) Cellular operators are bound to follow the terms and conditions of Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) Licence and comply with the directives of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). TRAI, as per the TRAI Act, is mandated for fixation of tariffs for Telecom Services. It is also the function of TRAI to lay-down the standards of Quality of Service to be provided by the Service Providers and ensure the Quality of Service and conduct the periodical survey of such service provided by the Service Providers so as to protect interest of the consumers for telecom service. All Cellular Operators are required to report tariffs for Cellular Service to the TRAI, who monitors the tariffs to ensure that no unduly high charges are levied on customers. Tariff for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service have

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.